

war, and who had been allowed by the Federal Government to organize a regiment, composed for the most part of North Carolina deserters, in June, 1864, led an incursion across this unguarded portion of our frontier and surrounded a conscript camp at Berry's Mill Pond, six miles below Morganton, just above what was then the terminus of the Western North Carolina Railroad. He surprised and captured at that place over one hundred of the Junior Reserves, who had been gathered there to be organized into a battalion. While the militia and citizens who did not belong to the Home Guards were gathering on the day of the capture at Morganton, 28 June, one of Kirk's scouts was shot but a half mile from Morganton by R. C. Pearson, a leading citizen of the town. On the second day thereafter a small squad of mounted men fired into the van of Kirk's command at the foot of the Brown Mountain, but he eluded them and reached the Winding Stairs, a narrow path near the top of Jonas Ridge, where he posted a strong detachment, while his prisoners were being moved on into East Tennessee. Here he was attacked by a body of men, composed of a few regular soldiers on furlough and several hundred militia, hurriedly gathered together from the counties of Burke, Caldwell, Catawba and Rowan, the whole body being under the command of Colonel H. A. Brown, of the First North Carolina Regiment, who had just recovered from a wound and turned out of his way to his command at Salisbury to help his neighbors. In the attempt to take this narrow path, Hon. W. W. Avery was mortally wounded and Calvin Houk and a number of others were seriously injured.

The excitement caused by this invasion induced the War Department at Richmond to order General Martin to establish headquarters at Morganton and assume command of the District of Western North Carolina. The writer, who was serving on the staff of Lieutenant-General Hood at the Chat-tahoochee river, first secured a leave of absence by the kindness of General Hood, and was then transferred to the Department of North Carolina in consequence of the death of all of his older brothers and the desperate illness of his father, and ordered to report to General Martin as Adjutant-General of the district. In the fall of the same year, when the writer